

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 4797

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, RP

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE PRESS PLAY ON SEARCH OF BX EMPLOYEES AT
SUBIC

REF: CINCPACREPPHIL 311014Z MARCH

1. ON 15 MARCH, 25 FILIPINO FEMALE EMPLOYEES OF THE MAIN NAVY EXCHANGE AT SUBIC WERE SEARCHED FOR STOLEN MERCHANDISE BY TWO U.S. CIVILIAN FEMALE SECURITY EMPLOYEES. SUCH SEARCHES, WHICH DO INVOLVE LOOSENING OF CLOTHING, ARE CONDUCTED PERIODICALLY AT THE SUBIC NAVY EXCHANGE AND HAVE NOT CAUSED SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS IN THE PAST. THE MARCH 15 SEARCH, HOWEVER, HAS LED TO CHARGES THAT THE 25 EMPLOYEES WERE FORCED TO LINE UP IN THE LADIES ROOM AND TOTALLY STRIP. THE EMPLOYEES UNION ASKED BY LETTER OF MARCH 22 THAT THE PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INCIDENT BE "DISCHARGED" AND "EXPELLED" FROM SUBIC BAY NAVAL BASE. SEVERAL OF THE EMPLOYEES HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY FILED PRIVATE SUITS IN THE LOCAL COURT AGAINST ONE OF THE U.S. SECURITY EMPLOYEES WHO SEARCHED THEM.

2. NAVAL AUTHORITIES AT SUBIC ARE CONDUCTING A FULL
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INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT AND HAVE ALREADY ACQUIRED

ENOUGH INFORMATION TO CONCLUDE THAT THE CHARGES ARE GROSSLY EXAGGERATED. CLOTHING WAS LOOSENEED BUT REPORTEDLY THERE WAS NO STRIPPING. THE MAJOR ERROR OF THE U.S. SECURITY EMPLOYEES WAS IN NOT HAVING A FILIPINO SUPERVISOR PRESENT WHILE THE SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED. OTHER THAN THAT, THE SEARCH WAS LITTLE DIFFERENT FROM THOSE ROUTINELY AND REGULARLY CONDUCTED WITHOUT INCIDENT AT THE SUBIC NAVAL BASE.

3. THE UNION APPEARS TO BE COOLING DOWN SOMEWHAT AS MORE OF THE FACTS OF THE CASE ARE UNCOVERED. HOWEVER, SEVERAL OF THE EMPLOYEES HAVE NOW TAKEN THE INCIDENT TO A REPORTER OF THE BULLETIN TODAY. HE PLANS TO PLACE A STORY IN TOMORROW'S BULLETIN BUT HAS GIVEN SUBIC NAVAL AUTHORITIES AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE CLARIFICATION OF THE INCIDENT. THIS REPORTER IS FAIRLY RESPONSIBLE AND WE HAVE AUTHORIZED SUBIC TO PROVIDE HIM WITH THE FOLLOWING: QUOTE TWENTY FIVE FILIPINA EMPLOYEES OF THE NAVY EXCHANGE WERE SUBJECTS OF A RANDOM SEARCH ON MARCH 15 AFTER THEY COMPLETED THEIR NORMAL WORKDAY. THE SEARCHES WERE CONDUCTED IN A COMFORT ROOM AT A NAVY EXCHANGE. ONLY ONE EMPLOYEE WAS SEARCHED AT A TIME AND TWO FEMALE SECURITY GUARDS WERE PRESENT DURING EACH SEARCH. THE ALLEGATION THAT SOME OF THE EMPLOYEES WERE MADE TO REMOVE CLOTHING DURING THE SEARCH ON MARCH 15 IS BEING INVESTIGATED BY US NAVY OFFICIALS. IF ASKED: HOW IS THE SEARCH CONDUCTED? NAVY EXCHANGE OFFICIALS SAID THAT DURING A SEARCH FEMALE EMPLOYEES ARE REQUESTED TO LOOSEN THEIR CLOTHING. EMPLOYEES ARE NOT ASKED TO REMOVE THEIR CLOTHING OR UNDER-GARMENTS DURING A ROUTINE SEARCH. DO SECURITY GUARDS TAKE THIS ACTION? NO. THESE ACTIONS ARE TAKEN BY THE EMPLOYEES THEMSELVES WHILE IN THE PRESENCE OF FEMALE SECURITY GUARDS. END QUOTE.

4. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW MUCH HEAT THE GOP MAY WANT TO PUT INTO THIS INCIDENT WITH BASE TALKS JUST AROUND THE CORNER AND DUST STILL IN THE AIR FROM THE GOMEZ CASE AND THE MACAPAGAL AFFAIR.
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